

135: Albert William Fisher

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Albert William Fisher

Rank: Rifleman

Battalion / Regiment: 12th Bn. London Regiment (The Rangers)

Service Number: 7113

Date of Death: 07 October 1916

Age at Death: 27

Buried / Commemorated at: Thiepval Memorial, Thiepval, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of Susan Fisher and the late Robert Collingwood Fisher and the husband of Eva Rooke (formerly Fisher), of Woodward's Cottages, Neston. His brother, Arthur Christopher, also died on service.

Albert William Fisher probably had no immediate association to Neston; on her remarriage Albert's widow had moved to Neston and this may have been the only connection to the town.

Albert was the son of London gatekeeper Robert Collingwood Fisher and Susan Harriet; Robert married Susan Lilly at Holborn, London, in July/September 1884 but Robert died in early 1896 in Shoreditch. However, at the time of the 1891 census the family was living in Hackney:

Thomas J.	Son								
Robert C. Fisher	Head	m	37		Gate Keeper				Shoreditch
Susan H.	Wife	m	29						Shoreditch
Sarah L.	Daughter		5		Schooler				Shoreditch
Robert J.C.	Son		4						Hackney
Albert W.	Son		1						Hackney
Henry	Son		3 months						Hackney

1891 census (extract) – 12, Gilpin Road, Hackney

Robert C. Fisher	37	gate keeper	born Shoreditch
Susan H.	29		born Strand
Sarah L.	5		born Shoreditch
Robert J.C.	4		born Shoreditch
Albert W.	1		born Hackney
Henry	3 months		born Hackney

Henry Fisher died, aged 2, in early 1893 but another boy was born in the 2nd quarter of 1894 and he was named Henry William. In the 1901 census, and following Robert's death, the family was somewhat fragmented with Susan living a short distance away with just two of her surviving four children, Sarah and Henry:

5929									
		Susan H. Fisher	Head	Wid	36	Paste Fitter, Boot Maker			St. Clements Danes, Strand
		Sarah L.	Daughter	S	15	Machinist's (?)			Mansfield St., (Ripland?)
		Henry W.	Son	S	7				Clapton

1901 census (extract) – 59, Holms Street, Haggerston, Shoreditch, London

Susan H. Fisher	36	paste fitter, boot maker	born St. Clement Danes, Strand
Sarah L.	15	machinist's (?)	born Mansfield St., (Ripland?)
Henry W.	7		born Clapton



Leopold House, 199 Burdett Road, Stepney, London

Robert Fisher (who would have been about 15, and whose full name is believed to have been Robert John Collingwood Fisher) has not been traced with certainty in the 1901 census but it is believed that he died (probably unmarried), aged 23, in late 1909 in Bideford, Devon.

Albert Fisher, however, is recorded in 1901 as being an 11-year old 'inmate' - one of 263 boys - at the 'Home & School For Little Boys, Leopold House' at 199 Burdett Road, London, one of the residences of "The National Incorporated Waifs' Association", otherwise known as Dr. Barnardo's Homes.

Leopold House was opened in January 1883 for orphaned boys aged 10 and 13 but in 1887 the property was extended and in 1908 it re-opened for school boys and provided bell ringing training. Leopold House closed in 1912 on the opening of new larger home on the Stepney Causeway Site and, after having a variety of other uses, was finally destroyed when hit by a German Bomb in 1941. The status of Albert at this time is, therefore, somewhat unclear - it cannot be determined whether he really was a 'waif' and 'inmate' or whether he was simply being schooled there.

However, by the time of the 1911 census Albert was again living with his mother:

GENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule 144
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
			State whether "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted.	Children born alive to present Marriage (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Children still living who have died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account.			
1 Susan H Fisher	Head	46	Widow		6	4	2				London Strand	
2 Albert W Fisher	Son	21	Single					Hair Preparer 807	Display Warehouse Worker 12		London Hackney	
3 Henry W Fisher	Son	17	Single					Draper's Clerk 050	Draper's Warehouse Worker 12		London Clapton	
4 Sarah L Fisher	Daughter	25	Single					Quilter for shoes 300	Draper's Warehouse Worker 12		London Haggerston	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

I certify that—		Total	
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper columns.	Male	Female	Persons
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 2 and 4 respectively, and have compared their sums with the total number of persons on this Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.	2	2	4
Initials of Enumerator	A. J.		

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Houses, Flats, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Albert W Fisher

Postal Address: 29 Pouchest Rd. St. Hackney

3 rooms

1911 census (condensed) – 29, Peshurst Road, Hackney

Susan H. Fisher	46	widow	born Strand, London
Albert Wm.	21	hair preparer, display warehouse	born Hackney, London
Henry Wm.	17	draper's clerk, display warehouse	born Clapton, London
Sarah L.	25	quilter for shoes	born Haggerston, London

Susan and Robert had six children of whom four had survived.

This residence (29 Penshurst Road) was a semi-detached property, close to the Penshurst Arms Hotel:

The situation is, however, further confused as it is known that Susan and Robert Fisher had another son, Arthur Christopher Fisher, who was born in Shoreditch in the 3rd quarter of 1896 - just a few months after the death of his father - although

Arthur has not been located in the 1901 census. However, Arthur Christopher has been located in the 1911 census - as a 15-year old 'boy inmate' (one of 266) at the Mile End Juvenile Mission, Leopold House - the same Barnardo's Home that his brother, Albert, had been recorded at ten years earlier! Arthur Christopher also died in WW1; he had emigrated to Canada, worked at Mr L R Tobey's Stores in Hamilton, Ontario, enlisted with the 3rd Battalion Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment) on 20 March 1916 and died, as a Private, in France on 31 August 1918 aged 22. It is interesting to note that his date of birth, as recorded by his army unit, was 30 May 1896, some months earlier than his officially-recorded birth in Shoreditch.



We have few details of the life of Albert William Fisher but it is recorded that he married Eva Eliza Williams (born 15 January 1893) in the Pancras registration district (later St Pancras) in April/June 1914 and they had one child, Eva L Fisher, who was born in Hackney on 9 May 1916.

Whilst we do not have Albert's Service Record it is recorded that he initially served with the 16th Battalion The London Regiment (Service Number 6459) but, when he died in October 1916, he was serving with the 12th Battalion, a Territorial unit. On 8 February 1915 the battalion came under the command of the 84th Brigade in the 28th Division but on 12 February 1916 they transferred to the 168th Brigade in the 56th (London) Division.

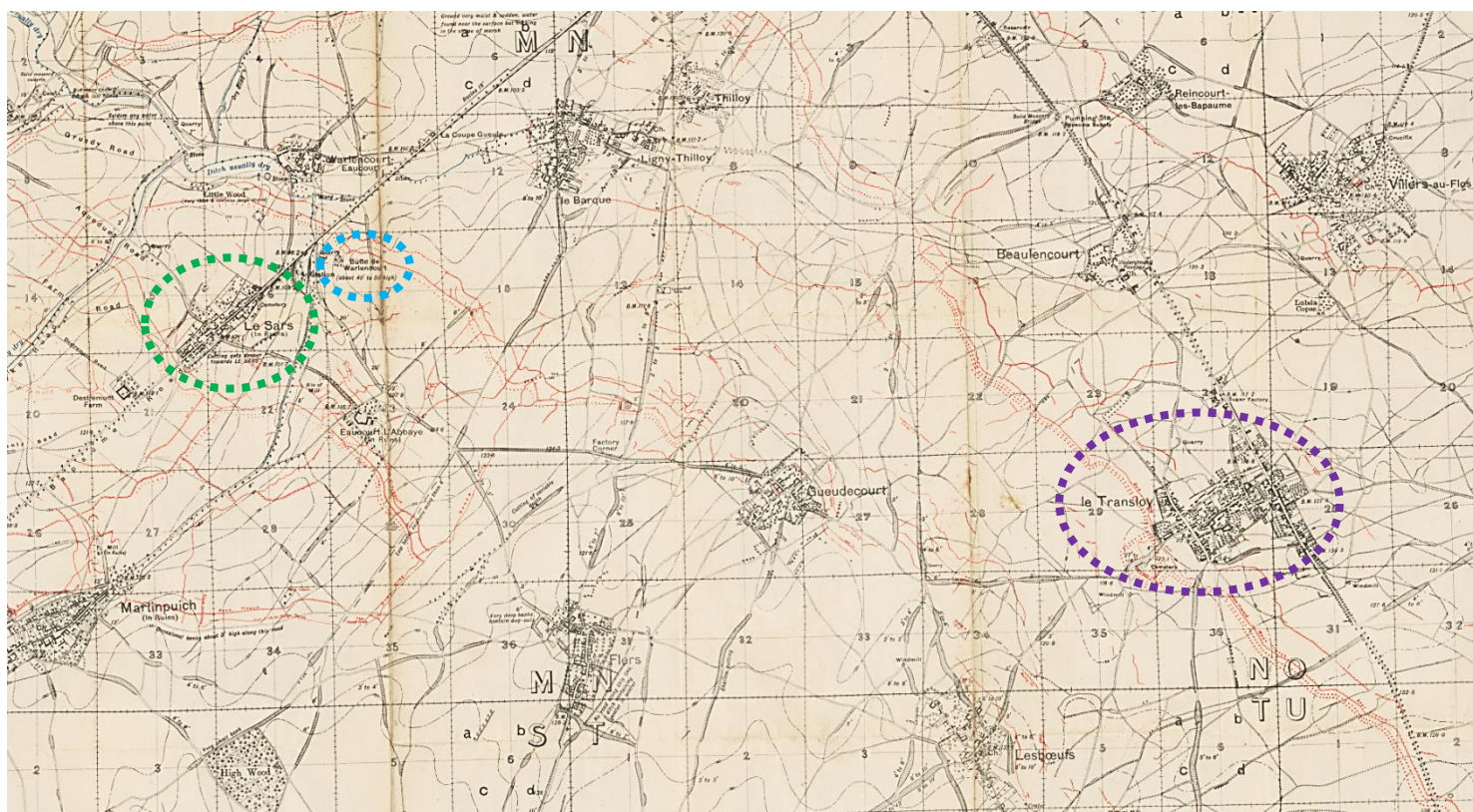
In 1916 the Battalion was in action on The Somme taking part in the diversionary attack at Gommecourt in early July, The Battle of Ginchy, The Battle of Flers-Courcelette, The Battle of Morval (in which the Division captured Combles on The Somme) and The Battle of the Transloy Ridges (1 - 20 October). It is highly probable that Albert Fisher was killed (7 October) during this last conflict:

Heartened by the occupation of much of the Thiepval Ridge, Haig determined to continue large-scale offensive operations into the autumn. The Battle of the Transloy Ridges represented the Fourth Army's part in this grand design, and its constituent costly attacks were intended to coincide with simultaneous advances by the Reserve Army planned for early October.

The fighting took place during worsening weather and dreadful battlefield conditions. The Fourth Army's objectives necessitated, as a preliminary, the taking of Eaucourt L'Abbaye and an advance on III Corps entire front was launched, after a seven-hour bombardment, at 3.15pm on 1 October.

The attack met fierce German resistance and it was not until the afternoon of 3 October that the objectives were secured. Rawlinson's follow-up attack was delayed by atrocious weather. Starting at 1.45pm on 7 October the advance involved six divisions and resulted in heavy British casualties and little success except for the 23rd Division's capture of Le Sars. Continuous rain during the night hampered the removal of casualties and further forward moves. The failure to secure original battle objectives led to a renewed major assault on the afternoon of 12 October when infantry on Fourth Army's right floundered towards German trench lines in front of Le Transloy, while formations on the left slogged towards the Butte de Warlencourt. Despite the slightest of gains (measured in hard fought-for trench yards) the operation was not successful.

[<http://www.cwgc.org/somme/>]



1 mile

The military map of 7 October 1916, the day on which Albert William Fisher was killed, shows the German trenches (in red) around Le Transloy (outlined in purple) and Le Sars (outlined in green). The Butte de Warlencourt (an ancient burial mound which is over 40 feet in height) is outlined in light blue.

During WW, the Germans constructed deep dugouts throughout the butte and surrounded it by several belts of barbed wire, making it a formidable defensive position in advance of Gallwitz Riegel (the Gird Trenches). After the Battle of Flers–Courcelette (15–22 September 1916) the view from the butte dominated the new British front line and was used by the Germans for artillery observation.

During the Battle of Le Transloy (1–20 October 1916), part of the Battle of the Somme, the Butte de Warlencourt was the subject of several attacks by the British Fourth Army, which were costly failures; attacks in November also failed. The 2nd Australian Division occupied the butte on 24 February 1917, during the German retirements made on the Somme front, preparatory to Operation Alberich, the retreat to the Hindenburg Line. The Butte de Warlencourt was recaptured by the German 2nd Army on 24 March 1918, during the retreat of the 2nd Division in Operation Michael, the German spring offensive. The butte was recaptured for the last time on 26 August, by the 21st Division, during the Second Battle of Bapaume. In 1990, the site was purchased for preservation by the Western Front Association.

Albert is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. *This bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916.* [CWGC]

In summary, Susan Fisher, Albert's mother lost

- a son, Henry, aged 2, in early 1893
- her husband, Robert, in early 1896
- a son, Robert J.C., aged 23, in late 1909
- a son, Albert William, aged 27, killed in action in France 7 October 1916
- a son, Arthur Christopher, aged 22, killed in action in France 31 August 1918

Following Albert William Fisher's death in October 1916 his young widow, Eva Eliza married again (at Pancras in late 1917) her second husband being William E Rooke (born 26 June 1892). Eva is then mentioned again, in the CWGC records (which would be about 1920), as living in Neston. So what brought her from London, where both she and Albert had a long connection, to Neston?

In the census returns for both 1901 and 1911 the only Rooke family in the district was that of Edwin Rooke, the Station Master:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedules 37
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

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NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.		PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged 10 years and upwards.				BIRTHPLACE of every person.		NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
		For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.	For "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow" opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one year."	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account.	Whether Working at Home.	(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish.	(2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, etc., and of the Province or State.	(3) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country.	(4) If born at sea, write "At Sea."		
Edwin Rooke	Head	55	Male	Married	33	11	8	6	Station Master	London	Not at home	Home	Ross Herefordshire	British	
Katherine Elizabeth Rooke	Wife	52	Female	Married	33	11	8	6	Wife	London	Not at home	Home	Grange Court Gloucestershire	British	
Lilian Maud Rooke	Daughter	22	Female	Single						Neston	At home	Home	Neston Cheshire	British	
William Ernest Rooke	Son	18	Male	Single					Local agent 598	Neston	At home	Home	Neston Cheshire	British	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 2 and 3 separately, and have entered their sums with the total number of persons.
(3) After making the necessary corrections I have completed all entries on this Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Total: Males 2, Females 2, Persons 4

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Parlours, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Edwin Rooke
Postal Address: Railway Station House Neston, Cheshire

5

1911 census (condensed) – Railway Station House, Neston

Edwin Rooke	55	station master	born Ross, Herefordshire
Katherine Elizabeth	52		born Grange Court, Gloucestershire
Lilian Maud	22		born Neston
William Ernest	18		born Neston

Edwin (who died in Neston on 4 November 1918 aged 62) had a son, William E(a)rnest Rooke and it was he who was Eva's second husband. It is recorded that William enlisted in the Cheshire Regiment in WW1 and, in March 1917, it was reported that he had

been wounded. It is also recorded that an Edwin George Rooke was born in late 1924 in Neston and his mother's maiden name was given as Fisher (he was not baptised at Neston Parish Church).

Eva Rooke was recorded, by the CWGC, as living in Woodward's Cottages; this is the small group of cottages lying off Bridge Street and behind the Rightway and Neston Pet Supplies shops.

B96048	C 255512	Fisher Albert William	1/12. Pa Hon Reg. Talbot Neston	7.10.16 London France 12/16	2. 8. 10.	2 8 10.	m.o. 17.	24. 2. 17	Corv (910) Henry W.	2. 8. 10.
									Henry W 3	--

WAR GRATUITY.
1914-1918
Transfer 5895
Regd. Pa. 3030 18.6.13
Serial No. 12966

A 4w 5040 sent 15.6.19.

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. In June 1919 Albert's brother Henry W., as executor, received a payment of outstanding wages of £2 8s 10d from the army and a War Gratuity of £3. This, a total value of £5 8s 10d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £830 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

In the 1939 register (29 September) William and Eva were living at 1 Talbot Gardens, Neston, where William was recorded as Neston postman N^o. 1498. With them was Eva's daughter, Eva L Fisher, a shorthand typist; she married Costakis Christophides in mid-1939 in the Liverpool South district. William died in early 1972 and Eva died in mid-1980 aged 87. One line of the Register has been redacted, presumably the details of William and Eva's son, Edwin.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
FISHER.	12/ Lond. R.	Pte.	7113
Albert. W.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	TP12/1013	34	
BRITISH	1	1	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920